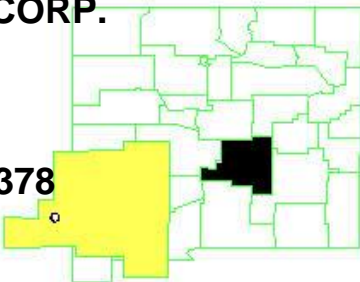


**CIMARRON MINING CORP.  
(Lincoln County)  
New Mexico**

**EPA REGION 6  
CONGRESSIONAL  
DISTRICT 02**

**EPA ID# NMD980749378  
Site ID: 0600897**



**Contact:  
Petra Sanchez 214-665-6686**

**Updated: August 2012**

## **Background**

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The Cimarron Mining Corporation (Site) is located in Carrizozo, Lincoln County, New Mexico, and is approximately 100 miles south-southeast of Albuquerque. The Site has been divided into two operable units (OUs). Cimarron Mill Site as OU-1 and Sierra Blanca Mill Site as OU-2. The OU-1 is about 10.6 acres in size, and is located on the north side of Highway 380. The OU-2 is 7.5 acres in size, relatively flat, and is located, east of U.S. Highway 54.



The mill sites operated from 1960 to July 1982, with some temporary shutdowns. The Cimarron Mill Site, OU-1 is an inactive milling facility originally owned by Zia Steel, Inc., and was used to recover iron and precious metals from ores. In 1979, the Site was sold to Southwest Mineral Corporation and soon

thereafter cyanide was apparently used to the extract precious metals from the ore. The Sierra Blanca Mill Site, OU-2, was owned by Scott-Tex, Inc. The Sierra Blanca Mill Site was used to recover a variety of metals from ore transported to the Site, although cyanide was apparently not used at this location. The mill shutdown temporarily in the early 1970's. In 1979, the Sierra Blanca Mill Site was leased to American Minerals Recovery Corporation. The milling operation at the Cimarron Mill Site was relocated to the Sierra Blanca Mill in June 1982. Both sites are currently inactive. An 8-foot fence restricts access to OU-1. OU-1 is currently used as an auto repair shop and salvage yard. OU-2 is fenced and is currently owned by the Town of Carrizozo. OU-2 is presently not being used for residential or commercial purposes.

The Contaminants of Concern are cyanide in ground water up to 4,330 parts per billion (ppb) at OU-1 and lead in soil and sediment up to 18,000 parts per million (ppm) at OU-2.

Approximately 1500 people live within a two-mile radius of the Site. People obtain drinking water from 29 municipal wells within three miles of the Site. The current land use for the surrounding area is residential, range land, agricultural, and some recreational.

The Record of Decision (ROD) for the Cimarron Mining Corporation Site (OU-1) was issued on September 21, 1990 and required extraction of cyanide from the shallow ground water and discharge to the publicly owned treatment works (POTW). The Record of Decision (ROD) for

OU-2 was signed by the EPA on September 6, 1991 and required solidification and stabilization of contaminated soil and waste piles exceeding 500 ppm lead, with on-Site disposal.

Remediation of the contaminated soil, sludge and sediments with lead content above 500 mg/Kg resulted in the excavation, cement stabilization and on site disposal of 182 cy of waste from five material piles and 43 cy of sediments from seven tanks and a cinder block trench, excavation and on site disposal of 345 cy of contaminated sediments from the discharge pit and surface soils, removal and off site disposal of process chemical drums, tanks and associated piping, backfilling of excavations (discharge pits, cinder block trench and surface soil areas) with on site soils and covering with clean fill. Later another 299 cy of contaminated soils were excavated, stabilized with cement and placed in the on site Disposal Area. The disposal area was covered with a graded low permeability cap and revegetated.



The NPL Site Deletion for OU-1 (partial deletion – soil only) and OU-2 took place on August 31, 2000.

## Current Status

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- NMED is assessing groundwater data and associated site information to assist in on-going O&M activities as well as for the next Five Year Review, scheduled for completion by July 2013.
- During the month of October, NMED performed groundwater sampling at the site to determine if the cyanide and other metals concentrations have fluctuated since the last sampling activity or if they are continuing to attenuate. O&M continues at the site while future actions are under consideration by NMED.
- EPA is finalizing its review of the 2010 Annual Report submitted by NMED in February, 2011.
- EPA met with NMED in May to discuss potential options for the site, once the backlog of administrative actions such as submitting Annual Reports to EPA are completed.
- EPA and NMED under discussions regarding the Annual Reports (current and backlog of reports). Future O&M also under discussion.
- NMED is performing O&M at the site. In October, NMED performed routine ground water sampling at both OU-1 and OU-2. Annual Reports describing data collected to date from NMED have been submitted and are under review by EPA..
- During the week of June 23-26, 2009 NMED performed filling-compaction-regrading of surface depressions to minimize ponding of precipitation and subsequent infiltration.

These activities are all part of their O&M and project oversight as well as their efforts towards eventual site deletion.

- EPA signed the Five Year Review on July 30, 2008 and mailed a copy to NMED to the City repository. In the town of Carrizozo, the public can review the findings in the Report by contacting the Carrizozo Town Clerk, visiting the NMED Santa Fe Office, the EPA Office, or view it on-line. The Report indicates the remedy remains protective and prevents potential exposure to cyanide or lead contamination from on-site contaminants.
- NMED updated their Operation and Management Plan (O&M Plan) and will continue to monitor the site and make its findings available to the public through annual reports.
- Two restrictive covenants were recorded by the City of Carrizozo on Sept. 29<sup>th</sup> 2006. While the covenant restriction prohibits drilling less than 100 feet below ground surface for obtaining ground water at Operable Unit 1, it does not restrict development of well drilling in general. It only serves to protect the present remedy in place. The restriction at OU-2 also protects the remedy and prohibits drilling near the contaminant cell on or near its perimeter.
- EPA proposed a plan to abandon several wells at OU-1, however, NMED requested additional time to assess the ground water remedy in place before they decide to support a site deletion.
- The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) is responsible for performing Operation and Maintenance (O&M) at the site.
- The EPA and NMED are reviewing monitoring data to determine if they support a Record of Decision Amendment, and invoking a technical impracticality waiver for Operable Unit 1.

## **Benefits**

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- Drinking water for 1,000 residents drawn from public and private wells within three miles of the Site have been protected from Site contaminants.
- The remedy at Operable Unit 2 (Sierra Blanca) was successfully installed and the operable unit was deleted from the NPL on August 31, 2000.
- The sites are available for re-use and redevelopment.

## **Population Protected and Volume of Contaminated Media**

Population in July 2008: 1,047. Population change since 2000: +1.1%

Approximately 1500 people live within a two-mile radius of the Site. A shallow aquifer, with poor water quality, and a deeper aquifer with better quality lie beneath the Site at OU-1. The RI revealed that the shallow ground water, to depths of approximately 55 feet, was contaminated with inorganics, including cyanide.

Inorganics, including cyanide, exist in shallow ground water underlying approximately 2.3 acres of the Site at OU-1. The RI indicated that there is a potential for limited migration of contaminated ground water to the lower aquifer. Therefore, the RI/FS report recommended remedial action for the cyanide contaminated ground water source in order to reduce or eliminate the potential for migration to the deeper aquifer, and to meet the NMWQCCR standard for cyanide in the shallow portion of the aquifer.

## **National Priorities Listing (NPL) History**

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Site Hazard Ranking System (HRS) Score: 38.93



Ground Water (OU-1): The Record of Decision (ROD) for OU-1 required extraction of cyanide from the shallow ground water and discharge to the publicly owned treatment works (POTW).

OU-1 Partial Site Deletion: August 31, 2000  
(soil only)

Soil Treatment (OU-2): The ROD for OU-2 required solidification and stabilization of contaminated soil and waste piles exceeding 500 ppm lead, with on-Site disposal.

OU-2 Site Deletion: August 31, 2000 Fed. Register/Vol 65, No. 170

### **Site Contacts**

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